

## Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SOPN, HU

SUBJ: BISHOP KALDY OF EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

REF: BUDAPEST 2689

1. CHARGE RECENTLY INVITED BISHOP KALDY AND HIS PARTY TO LUNCH, AS A FOLLOW-UP TO LATTER'S HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL FOUR-WEEK VISIT TO U.S., REPORTED EARLIER IN REFTEL. BISHOP WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE, WHO TEACHES ECONOMICS AT KARL MARX UNIVERSITY, AND BY PASTOR HOFENSCHER, WHO ATTENDED GETTYSBURG COLLEGE FOR ONE YEAR DURING HIS CAREER. KALDY, AN AMIABLE, EASY-GOING MAN IN HIS 50'S, WAS DELIGHTED WITH INVITATION. HE EAGERLY RETOLD MANY OF HIS EXPERIENCES FROM A VERY BUSY TRIP, STRESSING MAINLY HOW "ASTONISHED" HE WAS THAT EVERYONE RECEIVED HIM WITH AN OPEN MIND, THAT HE HAD INNUMERABLE OPPORTUNITIES TO TELL HIS STORY, BUT MOST OF ALL THAT MEDIA REPORTED WHAT HE HAD TO SAY WITHOUT DISTORTION.

2. IN SPITE OF VARIOUS POSITIONS HE HOLDS AS MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, PRESIDUM OF PATRIOTIC PEOPLE'S FRONT, ETC., BISHOP KALDY WNET TO SOME LENGTH TO STRESS THAT HE WAS NOT A COMMUNIST, THAT HE VIEWED HIMSELF AS AN INDEPENDENT CHURCH LEADER. HE HAS BEEN WORKING "WITHING THE SYSTEM" FOR A LONG TIME, HOWEVER, AND IT IS APPARENT THAT HIS RELATIONS WITH STATE ORGANS AND OFFICE OF CHURCH-STATE AFFAIRS ARE QUITE GOOD. HE SPOKE WELL OF DIRECTOR OF

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STATE OFFICE FOR CHURCH AFFAIRS, IMRE MIKLOS.

3. BISHOP KALDY CLAIMS THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 400,000 LUTHERANS IN HUNGARY, MOST OF THEM CONCENTRATED IN EASTERN AND SOUTHEASTERN PART OF COUNTRY, BUT WITH A FEW CONCENTRATIONS AROUND GYOR AS WELL. THERE IS AN EVANGELICAL SEMINARY WITH AROUND 50 STUDENTS. THE BISHOP SAYS HE IS ALLOWED TO PREACH ON HUNGARIAN RADIO AND THAT HIS CHURCH WEEKLY, EVANGELIKUS ELET, CAN BE SOLD AT NEWSSTANDS. CHURCH CAN PRINT AND PUBLISH ITS BIBLE IN HUNGARIAN AND IS ALLOWED TO TEACH RELIGION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO THOSE WHO SIGN UP FOR IT AS AN OPTIONAL SUBJECT. (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ALL FAITHS HAVE THIS RIGHT, IT IS NOT EASY TO OBTAIN STATISTICS REGARDING HOW MANY STUDENTS SIGN UP FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, PARTICULARLY IN CITIES.)

4. BISHOP

WAS PARTICULARLY EAGER TO STRESS HIS CONVICTION THAT EXPANDING AND IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN HUNGARY AND U.S. WAS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO HIM. HE CLEARLY WANTS TO BUILD ON HIS SUCCESSFUL VISIT, ABOUT WHICH HE SAYS HE HAS ALREADY REPORTED ENTHUSIASTICALLY NOT ONLY TO IMRE MIKLOS BUT ALSO TO FOREIGN MINISTER PUJA. HE SAID THAT BISHOP PREUSS, HIS HOST IN U.S., HAS ALREADY ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO VISIT HUNGARY NEXT YEAR, AND ONE OF HIS AIDES IS SCHEDULED TO COME TO BUDAPEST IN NEXT FEW DAYS WITH A TELEVISION CREW TO FILM ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE HERE.

5. COMMENT: IT SEEMS THAT DESIRE TO BE RECOGNIZED AS LEGITIMATE IN WESTERN EYES IS A NEED WHICH SOME HUNGARIAN CHURCH LEADERS SHARE WITH PARTY AND STATE LEADERS, ALBEIT FOR DIFFERENT REASONS. NOTHING APPEARS TO BE MORE IMPORTANT TO BISHOP KALDY THAN TO AVOID BEING PERCEIVED AS A TOOL OF STATE, AND TO BE RECOGNIZED AS AN INDEPENDENT CHURCH LEADER.

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6. IT IS CERTAINLY IN U.S. INTERESTS TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT SUCH CONCERN WITH EXPANDING TIES WITH U.S. WHILE ON PAPER BISHOP KALDY IS UNDOUBTEDLY A "CAPTIVE CLERIC" HE GAVE IMPRESSION DURING LUNCH OF BEING SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN STRIDING OUT UNDER COVER OF DETENTE IN EFFORT TO ACHIEVE MORE BENEFITS FOR LUTHERAN COMMUNITY IN HUNGARY. HIS INTEREST MAY WELL BE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

FROM AMERICAN LUTHERANS FOR THEIR RELIGIOUS COMPATRIOTS  
IN HUNGARY.

7. ONE MORE POINT OF INTEREST: CHARGE HAD ALSO INVITED  
MIKLOS AND HIS WIFE TO LUNCH. KALDY SAID MIKLOS DISCUSSED  
WITH HIM FOR OVER AN HOUR PROS AND CONS OF MIKLOS'  
ACCEPTANCE OF INVITATION. KALDY SAID MIKLOS FINALLY  
DECIDED THAT IF THERE WAS ONE CHANCE IN THOUSAND THAT  
AMERICANS MIGHT CONCLUDE THAT HE HAD ACCEPTED INVITATION  
TO SERVE AS KALDY'S MINITOR, HE (MIKLOS) WOULD NOT COME.  
HE DID NOT COME, A NIFTY TACTIC INDEED.

8. ACTIVITIES OF KALDY AS WELL AS THOSE OF OTHER  
RELIGIOUS LEADERS WILL BEAR CAREFUL SCRUTINY IN WEEKS  
AND MONTHS AHEAD BEFORE EMBASSY CAN RENDER ANY FIRM  
JUDGMENT RE WHAT IS REAL AND WHAT IS APPARENT IN  
CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS. RIGHT NOW, ALL WE CAN SAY WITH  
ASSURANCE IS THAT THERE IS RENEWED ACTIVITY WHICH ON THE  
SURFACE LOOKS PROMISING. THREAD OF INTEREST IN  
ESTABLISHING, MAINTAINING OR STRENGTHENING TIES WITH  
WEST SEEMS TO RUN THROUGH MANY GROUPS IN HUNGARIAN  
SOCIETY, SCIENTISTS, ACADEMICIANS, CULTURAL LEADERS,  
BUSINESSMEN, UP AND DOWN THE LINE. IT WILL BE  
INTERESTING TO SEE WHAT RESULTS FROM THE NEWLY-SURFACED  
INTEREST OF CHURCHES ON EXPANDING AND STRENGTHENING  
TIES WITH U.S.  
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